Amendments to the Claims

Please amend the claims according to the following listing of the claims.

1. (Currently Amended) A process for producing tablets by melt extrusion, in which an extrudable pharmaceutical mixture comprising a pharmaceutically active ingredient is heated and extruded in the form of a continuous product strip, wherein, in a first stage, the still deformable product strip is compressed to a continuous tablet belt, the individual tablets in the belt being connected together by product webs, in a second stage, downstream of the first stage, the tablet belt is allowed to cool to form a solidified tablet belt, in a third stage, downstream of the second stage, the tablets are mechanically singulated in a continuous process wherein a force having a component perpendicular to the plane of the tablet belt is asserted upon the tablet belt, the force being generated by passing the solidified tablet belt underneath a roller that directly contacts the solidified table belt and diverts the solidified tablet belt in a downward direction from a transport plane to a tangential plane arranged at an angle relative to the transport plane, and then the singulated tablets are transported further to a fourth stage downstream of said third stage where the singulated tablets are subsequently deflashed.

2. (canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein a force with a component parallel to the plane of the tablet belt is allowed to act on the tablet belt for singulation of the tablets.

4. (canceled)

5. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 3, wherein the parallel force component is generated by exerting a traction force on the solidified tablet belt.

6. (canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 12, wherein the singulating means comprises at least one rotatable roller for diverting the tablet belt out of a transport plane of the first transport means.

8. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 7, wherein the singulating means comprises two counter-rotating rollers which can be pressed against one another.

9. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 12, wherein the singulating means comprises at least one brush roller or embossed roller.

10. (canceled)

11. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 12, wherein a second transport means is provided between the singulating means and the deflashing means and comprises a shaking or vibrating unit.

12. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for producing tablets, comprising

at least one extruder means for heating a pharmaceutical mixture comprising a pharmaceutically active ingredient,

means for shaping a tablet belt from said extruded heated pharmaceutical mixture arranged downstream of said extruder, said extruder means forming a tablet belt comprising individual tablets connected by a product web,

first transport means for said tablet belt comprising means for cooling the extruded tablet belts and which is arranged downstream of said shaping means, and

means for singulating and deflashing said tablets, wherein said means for singulating and deflashing said tablets comprise at least one singulating means arranged downstream of said first transport means, the singulating means including at least one rotatable roller located above the tablet belt, the roller directly contacting the table belt and diverting the tablet belt out of a transport plane of the first transport means and in a downward direction from the transport plane to a tangential plane arranged at an

angle relative to the transport plane

and at least one deflashing means arranged downstream of said singulating means and spatially separate therefrom.

13. (Previously Presented) A process for producing tablets by melt extrusion comprising:

heating a pharmaceutical mixture;

extruding said pharmaceutical mixture as a continuous product strip;

compressing said product strip to form a continuous tablet belt, wherein the individual tablets in said continuous tablet belt are connected by a product web;

solidifying said continuous tablet belt downstream of said first step by cooling;

singulating continuously mechanically, downstream of said solidifying, said solidified tablet belt, by asserting a force having a component perpendicular to the plane of the tablet belt to said tablet belt, said force generated by diverting the solidified tablet belt in a downward direction from a transport plane to a tangential plane arranged at an angle relative to the transport plane; and

deflashing the singulated tablets, downstream of said singulating.

14. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 13, wherein said pharmaceutical mixture comprises an active ingredient.

15. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 13, wherein said singulating and said melt extrusion speed are substantially similar.

16. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 13, wherein a speed of a breaking roller is configured to match a speed of a transport belt.

17. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 13, wherein said melt extrusion and said singulating are continuous.

18. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 13, wherein said cooling renders said continuous tablet belt resistant to bending.

19. (Previously Presented) The process of claim 13, wherein said cooling renders said continuous tablet belt resistant to deformation.